

डा० अजय भूषण पांडे, भा.प्र.से.
मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी
Dr. Ajay Bhushan Pandey, IAS
Chief Executive Officer



भारत सरकार
Government of India
भारतीय विशिष्ट पहचान प्राधिकरण
Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)
तीसरी मंजिल, टॉवर II, जीवन भारती भवन,
कनॉट सर्कस, नई दिल्ली-110001
3rd Floor, Tower II, Jeevan Bharati Building,
Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110001

D.O. No.M/14/09/2017-01

14.09.2017

Dear Ms Anjali Bhardwaj, Ms Dipa Sinha, Ms Amrita Johri &
Mr. Nikhil Dey

Madams/Sir

This has reference to your press conference (PC) dated 08.08.2017 which was reported in some sections of media on 9th Aug 2017. In this press conference some misconstrued facts were presented to claim that Aadhaar has been the cause of denial of food to a large number of people and Aadhaar Based Biometric Authentication (ABBA) has been the cause of denial of food/ration under PDS.

It is learnt through media reports that claims were made that the Government's notifications mandating Aadhaar in schemes like PDS, job cards, etc., have resulted in denial of benefits to the vulnerable sections of the society. Few instances have been cited and some people were physically presented at the PC where some elderly people were claimed to have been denied of ration because either they did not have Aadhaar or their fingerprints could not be authenticated. Thus, an impression is sought to be created which is far from the fact, that Aadhaar is responsible for exclusion of such beneficiaries in a large number which runs into crores and therefore is anti-poor and should be discarded.

You all are well aware that during pre-Aadhaar era, there have been instances of large scale siphoning of benefits



Tel.: 23752675 Fax : 23752679
Website: www.uidai.gov.in email: ceo@uidai.gov.in



resulting in denials of services/benefits/ entitlements to the beneficiaries. Aadhaar has ensured the identity of beneficiary, thereby ensuring entitlements/benefits/services delivery in a targeted and transparent manner where the siphoning of a person's genuine entitlements has become next to impossible. Thus, Aadhaar has empowered people at large to receive their entitlements directly and in a transparent manner.

Also, you all are very well aware of the Aadhaar Act 2016 clearly mandates that not even one person be denied of benefits for the lack of Aadhaar. Aadhaar Act under Section 7 provides for 'delivery of benefits through **Aadhaar authentication or furnishing proof of possession of Aadhaar number**'. Aadhaar Act also provides statutory protection to those who are unable to authenticate because of worn out fingerprints or other reasons such as technical faults, connectivity failure, etc., and also, to receive benefits with alternate identity till the time one gets an Aadhaar. Regulation 12 A of the Aadhaar (Enrolment and Update) Regulations casts a responsibility upon the agency requiring Aadhaar to enrol its beneficiary and provide him benefits till he is given Aadhaar.

It is, therefore, absolutely clear that "in case a person has difficulty in getting his fingerprints authenticated on a machine, he can provide a copy of his Aadhaar card and can receive the benefits till the system is rectified. In some cases, like the PDS, Aadhaar authentication or proof of possession of Aadhaar is required at the time of service delivery to get rations. Typically, on a ration card we have an average family size of more than 5 beneficiaries. Hence, even if one beneficiary/family member authenticates his/her Aadhaar, the rations cannot be denied to the household. In case, an Aadhaar authentication fails for any reason, all departments/ministries have also been advised to develop alternate exception management mechanism to authenticate such beneficiary so that the services, benefits or subsidy continues to be provided to such beneficiaries. The

field authorities/agencies have been accordingly instructed through the notifications issued by the Government.

In spite of this, if a person is denied because he does not have Aadhaar or he is unable to biometrically authenticate, it is undisputedly a violation of guidelines/instructions/directions issued by the Government and such violators or denial related offences have to be punished by the local authorities/law enforcement department.

Fact remains that with ABBA, it will be much harder to fudge records showing distribution to fake and duplicates and deny the genuine beneficiaries and under the Aadhaar regime everyone involved in the delivery system is subject to a greater accountability and on the other hand, citizen is empowered because it is harder for anyone else to impersonate him and deny his rights.

The efficacy of Aadhaar has also been questioned on the ground that it is not able to curb quantity and quality frauds and corruption by the service providers – e.g., a fair price shop dealer continues to give poor quality food grains or give less quantities to the beneficiaries even after Aadhaar authentication. One needs to understand that Aadhaar only authenticates the beneficiary's identity and other abuses and transgressions have to be addressed by the respective agencies of the State/s.

Also, one should not forget that the beneficiaries of the erstwhile leaky system would do everything possible to blame it on Aadhaar by denying benefits to deserving people on one or other pretext and would squarely blame it on Aadhaar. They would make stories and videos showing how Aadhaar is leading to large scale denial, how old and poor people are being deprived of their rations and pensions, how a ration shop dealer has to climb up a tree to make his biometric authentication machine work, and circulate them in media. Hence, the

genuinely concerned persons on people's issues need to understand that, in fact, Aadhaar is a technology of people's empowerment and not a tool of exclusion and denial.

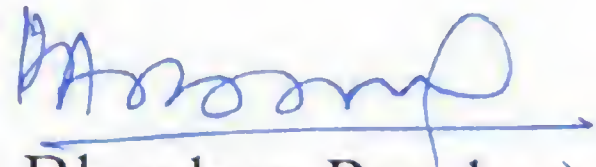
Though no system can ever claim to be perfect, I would make an earnest request to you to kindly assess as to what kind of problems people used to face and how leakages used to happen on account of bogus ration cards, etc., during pre-Aadhaar days and how Aadhaar will help in making the system more accountable and transparent.

Leaving arguments aside, as you and we both are genuinely interested in solutions to the problems, if any, of the beneficiaries/people, the UIDAI within its mandates would like to address the issues as per provisions of the Aadhaar Act and would like you to share with us any list of such beneficiaries who have been claimed to have a denial of benefits due to Aadhaar. We would highly value your help in this regard so that people do not suffer because of violations by few local unscrupulous elements.

Kindly note, the response to your RTI is being sent separately.

Regards

Yours sincerely,


(Dr. Ajay Bhushan Pandey)